OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02376/HHFUL **Householder (Full)**

Proposal: **The removal of the existing rear WC and porch, the installation of a ground floor and a first floor extension, existing outbuilding to be converted into habitable space with an infill extension, a new sunken patio area and renovations to the existing house.**

Location: **Manor Farm Church Road Catworth**

Applicant: **Malcolm and Charlotte Wilson**

Grid Ref: **509127 273621**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Manor Farm, Church Road, Catworth is a Grade II Listed Building situated within the Catworth Conservation Area. Manor Farm is a two storey, timber framed property with a render external finish and a timber frame cut roof with a close peg tile. It is set within a rural location in the north-east of Catworth.

This application seeks permission for the removal of the existing rear WC and porch, the erection of a ground floor and first floor extension, the conversion of an existing outbuilding into habitable space with an extension and other alterations at Manor Farm, Church Road, Catworth.

The Local Planning Authority are also considering a Listed Building consent application for the same development (Reference: 24/02377/LBC).

This application has been accompanied by the following:

- Design, Access and Heritage Statement;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment;
- Bat Mitigation Report; and
- Ground Investigation Report and Preliminary Structural Assessment.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)

The National Design Guide (2021):

C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
C2- Value heritage, local history and culture
I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
I3 - Create character and identity

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

24/02377/LBC - The removal of the existing rear WC and porch, the installation of a ground floor and a first-floor extension, existing outbuilding to be converted into habitable space with an infill extension, a new sunken patio area and renovations to the existing house - Pending consideration.

21/00418/HHFUL - Removal of WC and porch to rear. 2 storey rear extension. Re-building existing chimney. Renovation to west gable wall and re-roofing this section to match existing with extension - Refused.

21/00419/LBC - Removal of WC and porch to rear. 2 storey rear extension. Re-building existing chimney. Renovation to west gable wall and re-roofing this section to match existing with extension - Refused.

0901658LBC - Re-opening of fireplaces, removal of modern chimney and wall and re-roofing - Approved.

0901608FUL - Removal of porch and replacement with new - Approved.

0901492LBC - Replacement back door. Removal of front porch and replacement with new - Approved.

0900650LBC - Installation of external doors and windows, re-rendering and internal works to address uneven floor - Approved.

0502043FUL - Extension to dwelling - Approved.

0502044LBC - Extension and alterations to dwelling - Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Catworth Parish Council - Recommend approval.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Conservation Officer - Supports the application. The proposals preserve the listed building and its setting, they also have regard to the preservation and enhancement of the Catworth Conservation Area, and are therefore in accordance with ss. 16, 66 & 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, and also with policy LP 34 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan. The works may be approved subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure any damage/loss of historic fabric is minimised.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third party representations were received during the course of the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential Amenity
- Biodiversity

* Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets

The Local Planning Authority is required to ensure that special regard is given to preserving the listed buildings and their settings in relation to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Local Planning Authority is also required to ensure that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at Section 72. This is also reflected in Policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape. This is also reflected in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This application seeks permission for the removal of the existing rear WC and porch, the erection of a ground floor and first floor extension, the conversion of an existing outbuilding into habitable space with an extension and other alterations at Manor Farm, Church Road, Catworth. Manor Farm is a Grade II Listed Building and is situated within the Catworth Conservation Area.

It is proposed to remove the WC and porch to the rear; this part of the building appears to form part of the 1930's extension of the building. The demolition of the WC and porch are therefore not considered to harm the significance of the Listed Building. The remodelling of the porch and the provision of a lean-to extension was consented in 2005.

Following the removal of the WC and porch, it is proposed to erect a single-storey extension (garden room) that would encompass the existing pantry. The proposed extension would extend to the rear along the length of the 1930's extension and would be positioned back from the line of the gable and would sit under a part lead, part tiled roof. The proposed extension is considered to be a subservient addition to the main dwellinghouse, given its single storey scale. Furthermore, the proposed extension would be of an acceptable design and appearance that would not result in any visual harm to the main dwellinghouse. A condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to secure specific details of the finishing, re-rendering and schedule of works to the underlying timber frame.

The proposed first floor extension to provide an en-suite bathroom would be of a gable-end design that would reflect the existing property and would be a subservient addition to the main dwellinghouse given its lower ridge height and one-room width. The proposed extension would be of a timber frame construction with vertical timber cladding to provide a clear distinction to the existing dwellinghouse.

The dwelling has an existing outbuilding which is currently a stand-alone brick structure set less than 1 m away from the current building. It is in a poor condition and part of the roof has been replaced. The proposal involves the removal of a wall to the existing outbuilding, converting it into a habitable space (boot room, utility room and WC) and subsuming this structure into the main dwellinghouse by infilling the current passageway. External views of the building would be preserved as the infill would be hidden by the outbuilding and boundary wall.

The application also proposes the creation of a new sunken patio area, with the use of timber sleepers to act as retaining walls to the existing garden area, which is on the same level as the new extension to provide a level threshold from the garden room, as well as timber steps to provide access from the new patio area up to the existing garden path.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its scale and design and would preserve the Listed Building of Manor Farm as well as having regard for the preservation and enhancement of the Catworth Conservation Area. The Conservation Officer has considered the application and is supportive of the proposals subject to conditions.

Subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposal is therefore deemed to be in accordance with Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

Given the scale and nature of the proposal and the distance to the closest neighbouring residential property (65 Church Road approximately 148m south-west), the proposed development is not considered to result in any detrimental impacts on residential amenity.

As such, the proposal is deemed to be in accordance with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Biodiversity

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have

been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

This application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) and Roost Assessment and a Bat Mitigation Report.
Two bat roosts have been confirmed within Manor farm, a small day roost of common pipistrelle and a small day roost of brown long-eared bats. The report states that both these roosts are likely occupied by males/non-breeding bats, which are considered common and widespread and therefore of low conservation significance. The brown long-eared bat roost is likely to be lost due to the predicted interference to the roost entrance during construction and post-development. In order to protect against the loss of the existing roost, it is proposed a new bat roost access point would be created, close to the original access point, before the commencement of construction and erection of scaffolding and would remain unobstructed from both construction works and post-construction occupation of the new extension. It will also be necessary to obtain a Bat Mitigation Class License - Low Impact, from Natural England once planning permission has been granted and this can be conditioned as part of any approval. This mitigation proposal is therefore considered to demonstrate compliance with both legislation that protects protected species places of shelter and Local Plan Policy LP30.

Additional recommendations for mitigation and safeguarding measures are also provided in the PEA in respect of other habitats and faunal species in order to ensure that these remain fully safeguarded under the proposals. These are considered to be acceptable and would also be secured by condition on any planning permission granted.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal has satisfactorily investigated all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and identifies suitable mitigation and enhancement measures to minimise the impacts of the development on wildlife. Therefore, subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan and the NPPF 2023 in this regard.

*Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it:

* Is of an appropriate scale and design
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours.
* Is acceptable with regards to the impact on biodiversity;
* There are no other material planning considerations which lead to the conclusion that the proposal is unacceptable.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Jennifer Wallis**